TRANSMITTAL OF APPEAL BRIEF (Large Entity)

Docket No.
PHA 23,898A/16941

In Re Application Of: **Eran Sitnik**

Serial No.	Filing Date	Examiner	Group Art Unit
09/460,944	**December 14, 1999**	**Kieu Oanh T. Bui**	**2611**

Invention: **IN-HOUSE TV TO TV CHANNEL PEEKING**

TO THE COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS:

Transmitted herewith in triplicate is the Appeal Brief in this application, with respect to the Notice of Appeal filed on

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Dated: **12/10/2003**

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BRIEF ON APPEAL

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

Applicant:	Eran Sitnik	**Art Unit:**	2611
Serial No.:	09/460,944	**Examiner:**	Kieu Oanh T. Bui
Filed:	December 14, 1999	**Docket:**	PHA 23,898A(16941)
For:	IN-HOUSE TV TO TV CHANNEL PEEKING	**Dated:**	December 10, 2003

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BRIEF ON APPEAL

Sir:

I. INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to the provisions of 35 U.S.C. §§ 134 and 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.191 and 1.192, this paper is submitted as a brief setting forth the authorities and arguments upon which Appellants rely in support of the appeal from the Final Rejection of Claims 1-20 in the above-identified patent application on July 16, 2003.

II. REAL PARTY OF INTEREST

The real party of interest in the above-identified patent application is U.S. Philips Electronics.

III. RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

Appellants respectfully submit that the present application is involved in no other appeal or interference besides the present Appeal.

IV. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

The parent application, U.S. patent application Serial No. 09/460,944 was filed on December 14, 1999, originally included Claims 1-18.

In an Official Action dated July 6, 2000, the Examiner rejected claims 1-18 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,049,823 to Hwang (hereinafter "Hwang").

In a Response under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111, filed November 6, 2000, Applicant argued that Hwang shows an interactive television system that can provide video-on-demand services, shopping, and games on a "private viewing channel" as well as on a "group viewing channel" (citing, Col. 1, lines 58-61). In this way, a user may interact with a number of group-based games and services. For the purposes of increasing effective bandwidth, channel-processors (1) are mutually accessible (citing, Col. 5, lines 7-10) and communicated in a peer-to-peer workgroup (citing, Col. 5, lines 34-38).

Applicant further argued that Hwang describes in effect, two types of content viewing. Group-viewing includes

programming introductory information, games, group discussions, and shopping. Private-viewing includes movie on-demand, video games, shopping, hotel information and services, and remote office applications (citing, Col. 13, lines 35-48).

Thus, Applicants argued that Hwang in fact describes a system for providing multimedia with a hotel-type establishment wherein movies and video games are provided to each of the hotel rooms (e.g., see, FIG. 3a, and the accompanying description starting on Col. 13, line 54 and continuing thereafter). This is not an environment wherein query information is shared amongst the televisions of the various patrons of the hotel nor is this use suggested. In fact, in each of the applications, users are sending requests, such as gaming commands (citing, Col. 16, lines 53-56), fast forward (video on-demand), transaction information, or specific data is sent or received, such as chat-room information, or confirmation information for a purchase.

Applicant further argued that to facilitate setup and maintenance of the system, Hwang shows that the channel-processor may query the iTVpanel for "current state information" (citing, Col. 14, line 30, though Col. 15, line 15). In Hwang, it is the iTVpanel that connects to a television. In fact, the only query information that the iTVpanel provides is directly from the iTVpanel to the channel-

processor. For these reasons, Applicant argued that it is proper that each Applicant may be "their own lexicographer" in defining (and interpreting for that matter) terms utilized within a given patent or patent application. Hwang's state information pertains to acting states of the iTVpanel. Hwang in fact discloses three possible states for the iTVpanel including ready (citing, Col. 14, lines 37-39), session (citing, Col. 14, lines 40-43), and initial (citing, Col. 14, lines 51-54). This information is in fact the only information that would be required for maintenance and service of the described network including video on-demand bandwidth and content.

Arguably, this information may also be communicated to an iTVserver, but in no instances, is it disclosed, suggested, or even reasonable to expect that this information is provided to another hotel guest through another respective iTVpanel.

Applicant argued that the claims of the present patent application cannot reasonably be interpreted to be so broad. Specifically, Hwang does not disclose or suggest (emphasis provided) "[a] television comprising ... a processor configured to provide query information to the other television and configured to provide queried information in response to a query request from the other television" as required by Claim

1. Hwang in fact only contemplates the iTVpanel sharing information with a channel-processor as discussed above. In terms of the present invention, a "query request" is a request for "information identifying content currently watched on the queried television ..." (see, the patent application, page 4, lines 11-14). Hwang does not disclose or suggest this sharing amongst televisions or even this type of information to be shared.

Therefore, Applicant concluded that Claim 1 is patentable over Hwang.

With regard to Claims 7 and 12, Applicant argued that the same are directed to a system and method requiring similar elements as Claim 1 and are therefore also allowable as are Claims 2-6, 8-11, and 13-18 respectively because they depend from one of Claims 1, 7, and 12.

Applicant stressed that Hwang does not disclose or suggest "query compliance status information" as defined by the patent application. This definition utilized in the patent application may not be ignored to make it read on Hwang's acknowledgements between an iTVserver and channel-processor (citing, Col. 17, lines 35-43).

In the present application, the "query compliance status" is a determination of whether a queried television is setup to share content identifying information with a given

querying television (see, patent application page 8, lines 12-15). Applicant is free to utilize and define terms in the application and these definitions should not be ignored when viewing the prior art. However, even in that stretch, Hwang could not be said to anticipate under 35 U.S.C. §102 the claims elements as required by at least Claims 3-5, 8-10, 14, and 16-18. Nor does Hwang disclose or suggest each television receiving information identifying each other television of a plurality of televisions as essentially required by Claims 13 and 14. For all of the above, Claims 2-6, 8-11, and 13-18 and 18 are also patentable over Hwang. Accordingly, allowance of Claims 2-6, 8-11 and 13-18 is also respectfully requested.

A Final Official Action was issued on January 17, 2001, in which the Examiner reiterated the rejection of claims 1-18 as being anticipated by Hwang.

In the Final Official Action, Applicant argued that Claim 1, as submitted has been interpreted to cover a group-based gaming platform which was not the Applicant's intention to cover as broad an area. The Applicant did not intend this Claim to read on one user requesting whether another user wishes to play a game with them and the other person then responding although it is not at all clear that Hwang in fact supports even that operation.

Accordingly, Applicant amended claim 1 to clarify that the processor is configured to automatically provide query information to the other television and configured to automatically provide queried information in response to a query request from the other television. Claims 7 and 12 were similarly amended.

After filing a Continued Prosecution Application on June 18, 2001, another Official Action was issued on July 18, 2001 in which claims 1-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hwang in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,903,878 to Talati et al. (hereinafter "Talati").

In a Response filed on November 19, 2001, claims 1, 3, 7, 8, 12, 14, and 16 were amended and new claims 19 and 20 were added.

In the Response, Claim 1 was amended to clarify that the "processor [is] configured to provide query information requesting information identifying at least one of content and channel currently watched on the other television and configured to automatically provide queried information identifying at least one of content and channel currently watched at said television in response to a query request from the other television." Claims 7 and 12 were similarly amended.

New Claims 19 and 20 essentially require the elements of originally submitted Claims 1 and 7, respectively.

Applicant argued that the same are allowable for the same reasons as Claims 1 and 7. Furthermore, Applicant argued that new Claims 19 and 20 require a peer-to-peer connection.

In another Final Official Action issued on July 16, 2003, the Examiner rejected claims 1-20 as being unpatentable over Hwang in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,173,279 B1 to Levin et al., (hereinafter "Levin"). Consequently, Claims 1-20 are the claims on appeal. A copy of the rejected claims is attached hereto in the Appendix.

V. STATUS OF THE AMENDMENTS

Appellants have not filed any amendments subsequent to the issuance of the Final Rejection of July 16, 2003.

VI. SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a television having a connection configured to be operatively coupled to a connection of an other television and a processor configured to provide query information requesting information identifying at least one of content and channel currently watched on the other television and configured to automatically provide queried information identifying at least one of content and channel currently watched at said television in response to a query request from the other television. Methods and systems

employing such televisions are also provided in the present application.

The specification, from page 6 to page 13, discusses illustrative embodiments of the present invention in detail.

VII. THE APPEALED CLAIMS

Claims 1-20 are on appeal before the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences, with Claims 1, 7, 12, 19, and 20 being the independent claims. Independent Claim 1 is directed to a television comprising: a connection configured to be operatively coupled to a connection of an other television; and a processor configured to provide query information requesting information identifying at least one of content and channel currently watched on the other television and configured to automatically provide queried information identifying at least one of content and channel currently watched at said television in response to a query request from the other television.

Claims 2-6 directly or indirectly depend upon Claim 1 and further limit the scope of Claim 1.

Claim 7 is directed to a communication system comprising a plurality of televisions interconnected together, wherein said televisions are configured to provide query information requesting information identifying at least one of content and channel currently watched on at least one other of said plurality of televisions and are configured to

automatically provide queried information identifying at least one of content and channel currently watched in response to a query request from said others of said plurality of televisions.

Dependent Claims 8-11 directly or indirectly depend upon Claim 7 and further limit the scope of Claim 7.

Claim 12 is directed to a method of providing communications between a plurality of televisions, said method comprising: (a) sending a query request from any of said plurality of televisions to any other of said plurality of televisions requesting information identifying at least one of content and channel currently watched, and (b) sending queried information identifying at least one of content and channel currently watched from said any other of said plurality of televisions to said any of said plurality of televisions that sent the query request automatically in response to said query request.

Dependent Claims 13-18 directly or indirectly depend upon Claim 12 and further limit the scope of Claim 12.

Claim 19 is directed to a television comprising: a connection configured to be operatively coupled in a peer-to-peer connection of an other television; and a processor configured to request information identifying at least one of content and channel currently watched on the other television

and configured to automatically provide information identifying at least one of content and channel currently watched at said television in response to a query from the other television.

Claim 20 is directed to a communication system comprising a plurality of televisions interconnected together in a peer-to-peer connection, wherein said televisions are configured to request information identifying at least one of content and channel currently watched on at least one other of said plurality of televisions and are configured to automatically identify at least one of content and channel currently watched in response to a query from said others of said plurality of televisions.

Each of the appealed claims, mentioned supra, is set forth in the Appendix.

VIII. THE PRIOR ART RELIED UPON

The references relied upon by the Examiner in rejecting Claims 1-20 are U.S. Patent Nos. 6,049,823 to Hwang (hereinafter "Hwang") and 6,173,279 B1 to Levin et al., (hereinafter "Levin").

IX. THE ISSUES

The issue raised in the Final Rejection dated July 16, 2003 remaining for resolution is are Claims 1-20 on appeal

patentable, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), in light of the combination of Hwang and Levin.

X. THE REFERENCES

Hwang discloses an interactive television system for hotels where a plurality of televisions are interconnected. The televisions in the system can be used to watch private channels (private viewing). Each television in the system can also interact with another television in the system (group viewing), such as playing a horse racing game or participating in a shopping tour (column 16, lines 53-59). Each television in the system can access every group and private channel through a set-top box provided with each television.

Levin discloses a system that uses a natural language interface to retrieve information from a data source. Thus, for example, if a user desires a telephone number of an establishment, he or she would go to a data source, such as a particular web site, and make a textual or spoken query for the telephone number. For example, the query may be "call the pizza place on Main Street in Westfield." From this query, the system retrieves the information from the data source and the action is performed (i.e., the call is made).

XI. GROUPING OF THE CLAIMS

The prior art rejections of issue herein apply to more than one claim. However, Appellant submits that at least dependent claims 2-6, 8-11 and 13-18 patentably distinguish over the cited references independently of their base claims for the reasons set forth in the Responses of November 6, 2000 and November 19, 2001, each of which is incorporated herein by its reference.

XII. APPELLANT'S ARGUMENTS

> The rejection of Claims 1-20, on appeal, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Hwang in view of Levin is improper.

Firstly, the Applicant respectfully submits that the combination of the Hwang and Levin references do not show all of the features of the independent claims (1, 7, 12, 19, and 20). Secondly, the Applicant submits that even if all of the features of the claims are shown in the combination of Hwang and Levin, there is no motivation or suggestion for their combination. Thirdly, the Applicant submits that at least the Levin reference is from a non-analogous art.

With regard to the first argument, the Applicant submits that not all of the features of the claims are shown in the combination of the Hwang and Levin references and

therefore, the Examiner has failed to make a prima facie showing of obviousness.

Claim 1 recites:

> "a processor configured to provide query information requesting information identifying at least one of content and channel currently watched on the other television and configured to automatically provide queried information identifying at least one of content and channel currently watched at said television in response to a query request from the other television."

Applicants respectfully submit that neither Hwang nor Levin disclose such features. Hwang does not teach the televisions querying any other televisions in the system for any type of information. Hwang merely teaches an interconnected network of televisions adapted for interactive operation with each other. Levin does not cure this deficiency in Hwang. Levin teaches making a natural language query from a telephone to a data store (e.g., a website). The query of Levin is not between interconnected televisions, is not for information relating to the device, and does not relate to one of content and channel currently watched.

Thus, claim 1 patentably distinguishes over the combination of Hwang and Levin and is allowable. Claims 7, 12,

19, and 20 contain similar recitations and are allowable for the same reasons as set forth above with regard to claim 1.

Independent claims 1, 7, 12, 19, and 20 are not rendered obvious by the cited references because neither the Hwang patent nor the Levin patent, whether taken alone or in combination, teach or suggest a television, communication system, or method having the features described above. Accordingly, claims 1, 7, 12, 19, and 20 patentably distinguish over the prior art and are allowable. Claims 2-6, 8-11, and 13-18 being dependent upon claims 1, 7, and 12, are at least allowable therewith.

Secondly, assuming arguendo that the features of the claims are shown in the combination of references, the Applicant further submits that there is no motivation or suggestion to combine the references and thus, the combination is improper and must be withdrawn.

Recently, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit (the "Federal Circuit") restated the legal test applicable to rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) (*In re Rouffet*, 47 USPQ2d 1453 (Fed. Cir., July 15, 1998)). The Court stated:

> [V]irtually all [inventions] are combinations of old elements. Therefore an Examiner may often find every element of a claimed invention in the prior art. Furthermore, rejecting patents solely by finding prior art corollaries for the claimed elements would permit an Examiner to use the claimed invention

itself as a blueprint for piecing together elements in the prior art to defeat the patentability of the claimed invention. Such an approach would be "an illogical and inappropriate process by which to determine patentability." To prevent the use of hind sight based on the invention to defeat patentability of the invention, this court requires the Examiner to show a motivation to combine the references that create the case of obviousness. The Board [of Appeals] did not, however, explain what specific understanding or technological principle within the knowledge of one of ordinary skill in the art would have suggested the combination. Instead, the Board merely invoked the high level of skill in the field of the art. If such a rote indication could suffice to supply a motivation to combine, the more sophisticated scientific fields would rarely, if ever, experience a patentable technical advance. Instead, in complex scientific fields, the Board could routinely identify the prior art elements in an application, invoke the lofty level of skill, and rest its case for rejection. To counter this potential weakness in the obviousness construct **the suggestion to combine requirements stands as a critical safeguard against hindsight analysis and rote application of the legal test for obviousness.**

In re Rouffet, 47 USPQ2d 1457-58 (Fed. Cir., July 15, 1998) (citations omitted, emphasis added).

More recently, the Federal Circuit again dealt with what is required to show a motivation to combine references under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). In this case the court reversed the decision of the Board of appeals stating:

> [R]ather then pointing to specific information in Holiday or Shapiro that suggest the combination..., the Board instead described in detail the similarities between the Holiday and Shapiro references and the claimed invention, noting that one reference or the other-in combination with each other... described all of the limitations of the pending claims. Nowhere does the Board particularly identify any suggestion, teaching, or motivation to combine the ... references, nor does the Board make

> specific-or even inferential-findings concerning the identification of the relevant art, the level of ordinary skill in the art, the nature of the problem to be solved, or any factual findings that might serve to support a proper obviousness analysis.
>
> *In re Dembiczak*, 50 USPQ2d 1614, 1618 (Fed. Cir., April 28, 1999) (citations omitted).

Thus, from both *In re Rouffet* and *In re Dembiczak* it is clear that the Federal Circuit requires a specific identification of a suggestion, motivation, or teaching why one of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to select the references and combine them. This the Examiner has not done. The Examiner only states that it would be obvious "to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to modify Hwang's television-to-television interactive system with Levin's teaching technique in using query information as means for communicating between PCs or PC-televisions, it is well known in the art that a PC can be incorporated into a TV as a PCTV for handling television and PC functions, as long as there is a request for that queried information initiated by one of the interactive television users as desired." (see page 3 of the Final Official Action).

However, there is no teaching or suggestion in Hwang that the televisions in the system query each other for any type of information, and certainly not for information relating to the device, such as the content and/or channel being watched on the device. Therefore, those skilled in the art would not

be motivated to look to Levin for teaching the querying of a device (or any reference teaching a query). Thus, the link between the Hwang and Levin teachings could have only been gleaned from the present application itself, which is improper.

Therefore, the Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner, without identifying a suggestion, motivation, or teaching for combining the references, has used impermissible hindsight to reject claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a). As discussed above, the Federal Circuit in *In re Rouffet* stated that virtually all inventions are combinations of old elements. Therefore an Examiner may often find every element of a claimed invention in the prior art. To prevent the use of hindsight based on the invention to defeat patentability of the invention, the Examiner is required to show a motivation to combine the references that create the case of obviousness. Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner has not met this burden.

In light of the state of the law as set forth by the Federal Circuit and the Examiner's lack of specificity with regard to the motivation to combine the cited references, the applicant respectfully submits that the rejection for obviousness under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) lack the requisite motivation and must be withdrawn.

Thirdly, Applicant respectfully submits that at least the Levin reference is not proper because it is from a non-analogous art. To be considered analogous art, the references cited by the Examiner must be either in the same field as the invention or be reasonably pertinent to the problem faced by the inventor.[1] Applicant respectfully submits that neither of these requirements have been met in the present case.

With regard to the first prong of the non-analogous art test, namely, whether a reference is within the field of the invention, the Federal Circuit has stated:

> We have reminded ourselves and the PTO that it is necessary to consider "the reality of the circumstances" -in other words, common sense- in deciding in which fields a person of ordinary skill would reasonably be expected to look for a solution to the problem facing the inventor.[2]

Thus, a case-by-case analysis must be made to determine if a person of ordinary skill would look to the fields of the references for a solution to the problem facing the inventor.[3]

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[1] See, *e.g.*, *In re Clay*, 966 F.2d 656, 23 USPQ 2d 1058 (Fed. Cir. 1992); *In re Paulsen*, 30 F.3d 1475, 31 USPQ 2d 1671 (Fed. Cir. 1994); and *Wang Labs., Inc. v. Toshiba Corp.*, 993 F.2d 858, 26 USPQ 2d 1767 (Fed. Cir. 1993).

[2] *In re Oetiker*, 977 F.2d 1443, 24 USPQ 2d 1443, 1446 (Fed. Cir. 1992).

[3] Id. See also, *In re Wright*, 848 F.2d 1216, 6 USPQ 2d 1959, 1962 (Fed. Cir. 1988) ("[A]s with all section 103 decisions, judgement must be brought to bear based on the facts of each case.").

In clarifying how to determine the second prong of the test, namely, whether a reference is reasonably pertinent to the particular problem with which an inventor was involved, the Federal Circuit has stated that:

> [a] reference is reasonably pertinent if ... it is one which, because of the matter with which it deals, logically would have commended itself to the inventor's attention in considering his problem ... If a reference disclosure has the same purpose as the claimed invention, the reference relates to the same problem ... [I]f it is directed to a different purpose, the inventor would accordingly have had less motivation or occasion to consider it.[4]

With regard to the first prong of the non-analogous art test, and in view of the Federal Circuit's narrow view of what is in the same field of endeavor,[5] it cannot be said that the Levin reference is within the same field of endeavor as the present invention, which is directed to a television and communication system comprising a plurality of interconnected televisions. The Levin reference is not remotely related to such devices. If memory circuits are not considered in the same field of endeavor as compact modular memories, as held by

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[4] *In re Clay*, 23 USPQ 2d at 1060-1061.

[5] In *Wang Laboratories*, 26 USPQ 2d 1767, in which the present invention related to memory circuits and the cited reference referred to compact modular memories, the Federal Circuit held that the cited references were not in the same field of endeavor, stating that the reference "... is not in the same field of endeavor as the claimed subject matter merely because it relates to memories."

the Federal Circuit in the *Wang* case[6], then the Levin reference cannot be considered to be in the same field of endeavor as a television or communication system comprising a plurality of interconnected televisions. As discussed above, Levin is directed to querying a data source with natural language. Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that at least the Levin reference is not in the same field of endeavor as the present invention.

With regard to the second prong of the non-analogous test, Applicant respectfully submits that the Levin reference is not reasonably pertinent to the particular problem with which the inventor of the present invention was involved.

As discussed above and at length in the specification, the present invention is directed to the problem of knowing what others, for example children, are watching on another television, which may be in the same household or remotely located. This is a very different problem then faced by the inventors of the Levin reference. In Levin, the inventors were faced with the problem of overcoming shortcomings in the prior art of making queries for information from databases. Thus, Levin was not faced with the same problem as was the inventor of the present invention. To paraphrase the words of the Federal Circuit, the matter with

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[6] Id.

which the Levin reference deals, logically would not have commended itself to the inventor's attention in considering his problem. Thus, since it is directed to different purposes, the inventor would accordingly have had no motivation or occasion to consider it.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that at least the Levin reference is not in the same field of endeavor as the present invention, nor is it reasonably pertinent to the particular problem with which the inventor of the present invention was involved. Consequently, it is respectfully requested that the cited references be withdrawn, thereby rendering the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejections of claims 1-20 moot.

Lastly, Applicant submits that the dependent claims patentably distinguish over the cited references independently of their base claims for at least the reasons set forth in Sections IV and XI, supra.

XIII. CONCLUSION

In view of the remarks submitted hereinabove, the references applied against Claims 1-20 on appeal do not render those claims unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Thus, Appellant submits that the § 103(a) rejection is in error and must be reversed.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees or credit any overpayment in connection herewith to Deposit Account No. 19-1013/SSMP. A triplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

Respectfully submitted,

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APPENDIX

CLAIMS ON APPEAL: CLAIMS 1-20
Application Serial No. 09/460,944

1. (Previously Presented) A television comprising:

a connection configured to be operatively coupled to a connection of an other television; and

a processor configured to provide query information requesting information identifying at least one of content and channel currently watched on the other television and configured to automatically provide queried information identifying at least one of content and channel currently watched at said television in response to a query request from the other television.

2. (Original) The television of Claim 1, wherein said connection is configured to provide said query and queried information to the other television.

3. (Previously Presented) The television of Claim 1, wherein said processor is configured to receive query compliance status information identifying if said television is setup to share queried information with the other television.

4. (Original) The television of Claim 3, wherein said processor is configured to receive identifying information

from a user prior to enabling the user to do at least one of set and change query compliance status information.

5. (Original) The television of Claim 3, wherein said processor is configured to provide any queried information to the other television that does not violate the query compliance status of the other television.

6. (Original) The television of Claim 1, wherein said connection is one of an in-home network connection and an Internet connection.

7. (Previously Presented) A communication system comprising a plurality of televisions interconnected together, wherein said televisions are configured to provide query information requesting information identifying at least one of content and channel currently watched on at least one other of said plurality of televisions and are configured to automatically provide queried information identifying at least one of content and channel currently watched in response to a query request from said others of said plurality of televisions.

8. (Previously Presented) The communication system of Claim 7, wherein each of said plurality of televisions is configured to receive query compliance status information identifying if said each of said plurality of television is

setup to share queried information with each other of said plurality of televisions.

9. (Original) The communication system of Claim 8, wherein each of said plurality of televisions is configured to receive identifying information from a user prior to enabling the user to do at least one of set and change query compliance status information.

10. (Original) The communication system of Claim 8, wherein each of said plurality of televisions is configured to provide any queried information to others of said plurality of televisions that does not violate the query compliance status of said others of said plurality of televisions.

11. (Original) The communication system of Claim 1, wherein each of said plurality of televisions are configured to be interconnected by one of an in-home network connection and an Internet connection.

12. (Previously Presented) A method of providing communications between a plurality of televisions, said method comprising:

a. sending a query request from any of said plurality of televisions to any other of said plurality of televisions requesting information identifying at least one of content and channel currently watched, and

b. sending queried information identifying at least one of content and channel currently watched from said any other of said plurality of televisions to said any of said plurality of televisions that sent the query request automatically in response to said query request.

13. (Original) The method of Claim 12, comprising identifying each of said plurality of televisions to each other of said plurality of televisions prior to act a.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 13, wherein said identifying comprises identifying a query compliance status between each of said plurality of televisions identifying if each of said plurality of television is setup to share queried information with each other of said plurality of televisions.

15. (Original) The method of Claim 13, wherein said identifying is performed by a mediator that is separate from each of said plurality of televisions.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 12, comprising confirming a query compliance status of said any of said plurality of televisions that sent the query request prior to performing act b and not sending queried information if said query violates said query compliance status, wherein said query compliance status information identifies if said any other of

said televisions is setup to share queried information with said any of said plurality of televisions.

17. (Original) The method of Claim 16, comprising receiving said query compliance status of said any of said plurality of televisions from a user of said any of said plurality of televisions.

18. (Original) The method of Claim 17, comprising requesting user identifying information prior to receiving said query compliance status and not altering said query compliance status if altering said query compliance status violates access rights of said user.

19. (Previously Added) A television comprising:

a connection configured to be operatively coupled in a peer-to-peer connection of an other television; and

a processor configured to request information identifying at least one of content and channel currently watched on the other television and configured to automatically provide information identifying at least one of content and channel currently watched at said television in response to a query from the other television.

20. (Previously Added) A communication system comprising a plurality of televisions interconnected together in a peer-to-peer connection, wherein said televisions are

configured to request information identifying at least one of content and channel currently watched on at least one other of said plurality of televisions and are configured to automatically identify at least one of content and channel currently watched in response to a query from said others of said plurality of televisions.